

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A method of pre-soaking a non-edible collagen casing for foodstuffs and reinforcing the clip strength and cooking resistance thereof, ~~characterized by~~ comprising treating the dried collagen casing with an aqueous solution of at least one salt selected from the group consisting of sodium bicarbonate, sodium sulphate, ammonium chloride, calcium chloride, sodium hydrogen phosphate, potassium hydrogen phosphate, potassium chloride, ammonium sulphate, ~~optionally in combination with sodium chloride,~~ wherein the total salt concentration being in said aqueous solution is in the range of 5-18% by weight.

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the total salt concentration in said aqueous solution is in the range of 8-12% by weight.

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the aqueous solution contains at least two salts.

Claim 4. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims 1-3~~ claim 1, wherein the pre-soaked non-edible collagen casing is further packed in a packing of a material having good barrier properties.

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) A pre-soaked, reinforced non-edible collagen casing, which is obtainable by means of the method according to ~~any one of claims 1-4~~ claim 1.

Claim 6. (New) A method according to claim 1 wherein said aqueous solution additionally includes sodium chloride.

Claim 7. (New) A method according to claim 6, wherein the total salt concentration in said aqueous solution is in the range of 8-12% by weight.

Claim 8. (New) A method according to claim 2, wherein the aqueous solution contains at least two salts.

Claim 9. (New) A method according to claim 6, wherein the aqueous solution contains at least two salts in addition to sodium chloride.

Claim 10. (New) A method according to claim 2, wherein the pre-soaked non-edible collagen casing is further packed in a packing of a material having good barrier properties.

Claim 11. (New) A method according to claim 3, wherein the pre-soaked non-edible collagen casing is further packed in a packing of a material having good barrier properties.

Claim 12. (New) A method according to claim 6, wherein the pre-soaked non-edible collagen casing is further packed in a packing of a material having good barrier properties.

Claim 13. (New) A pre-soaked, reinforced non-edible collagen casing, which is obtainable by means of the method according to claim 2.

Claim 14. (New) A pre-soaked, reinforced non-edible collagen casing, which is obtainable by means of the method according to claim 3.

Claim 15. (New) A pre-soaked, reinforced non-edible collagen casing, which is obtainable by means of the method according to claim 4.

Claim 16. (New) A pre-soaked, reinforced non-edible collagen casing, which is obtainable by means of the method according to claim 6.